Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-70 (canceled)

Claim 71 (currently amended): A transgenic plant comprising a recombinant polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide that is at least [[60%]] 95% identical to SEQ ID NO: 4,

~~wherein said polypeptide comprises a first conserved domain that is at least 68% identical to amino acids 134-199 of SEQ ID NO: 4, a second conserved domain that is at least 74% identical to amino 332-401 of SEQ ID NO: 4, and a third conserved domain that is at least 60% identical to amino 405-478 of SEQ ID NO: 4;~~

~~wherein the percent identity is determined using BLASTP program using as defaults a wordlength (W) of 3, an expectation (E) of 10, and the BLOSUM62 scoring matrix; and~~

wherein the polypeptide is overexpressed in the transgenic plant; and

wherein the polypeptide, when ~~expressed~~ overexpressed in the transgenic plant, regulates transcription and confers to the transgenic plant greater tolerance to water deprivation as compared to a control plant.

Claim 72 (currently amended): The transgenic plant of claim 71, wherein the polypeptide is at least [[80%]] 98% identical to SEQ ID NO: 4.

Claim 73 (canceled)

Claim 74 (previously presented): The transgenic plant of claim 71, wherein the recombinant polynucleotide comprises SEQ ID NO: 3.

Claim 75 (previously presented): The transgenic plant of claim 71, wherein the polypeptide comprises SEQ ID NO: 4.

Claim 76 (previously presented): The transgenic plant of claim 71, wherein the transgenic plant is more tolerant to a treatment of seven to eight days of a drought stress, or to a treatment of seven to eight days of a drought stress followed by rewatering and two to three days of a recovery period, than the control plant.

Claim 77 (previously presented): The transgenic plant of claim 71, wherein the recombinant polynucleotide comprises a constitutive, inducible, or tissue-specific promoter that regulates expression of the polypeptide.

Claim 78 (previously presented): A transgenic seed produced from the transgenic plant of claim 71.

Claims 79-82 (canceled)

Claim 83 (new): A method of producing and selecting a plant exhibiting greater tolerance to water deprivation as compared to a control plant, comprising:

(a) introducing a recombinant polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide that is at least 95% identical to SEQ ID NO: 4 into a target plant;

wherein the polypeptide is overexpressed in the transgenic plant; and

wherein the polypeptide, when overexpressed in the target plant, regulates transcription and increases tolerance to water deprivation; and

(b) selecting one or more transformed plants exhibiting greater tolerance to water deprivation as compared to the control plant.

Claim 84 (new): The method of claim 83, wherein the polypeptide is at least 98% identical to SEQ ID NO: 4.

Claim 85 (new): The method of claim 83, wherein the recombinant polynucleotide comprises SEQ ID NO: 3.

Claim 86 (new): The method of claim 83, wherein the polypeptide comprises SEQ ID NO: 4.

Claim 87 (new): The method of claim 83, wherein the transformed plant is more tolerant to a treatment of seven to eight days of a drought stress, or to a treatment of seven to eight days of a drought stress followed by rewatering and two to three days of a recovery period, than the control plant.

Claim 88 (new): The method of claim 83, wherein the recombinant polynucleotide comprises a constitutive, inducible, or tissue-specific promoter that regulates expression of the polypeptide.

Claim 89 (new): A transgenic seed produced by a transformed plant produced and selected by the method of claim 83.